

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-07 COME-00
TRSE-00 /047 W
-----091351Z 093820 /53

R 090825Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7959
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 2501

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, KU, UK
SUBJECT: GOK 'BAN' ON "FINANCIAL TIMES"

REF: KUWAIT 2427

1. DURING MEETING WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR LAMB MAY 8, HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD MET WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION SHAIKH JABER AL-ALI PREVIOUS DAY TO INQUIRE ABOUT REASONS FOR BANNING OF "FINANCIAL TIMES" (REFTEL). JABER AL-ALI SAID THAT THE KUWAITIS WERE UPSET BY SUGGESTION OF "FINANCIAL TIMES" REPORTER ANTHONY MCDERMOTT THAT AMIR WAS PLANNING TO STEP DOWN. HE DENIED THAT THIS WAS BEING CONSIDERED. HE BELIEVED THAT MCDERMOTT HAD OBTAINED THIS INFORMATION FROM NAQUIB RIYADH RAYESS WHO IS INVOLVED IN PUBLISHING EUROPEAN EDITION OF AN-NAHAR AND WHOM THE KUWAITIS CONSIDERED TO BE IRRESPONSIBLE EDITOR SEEKING TO STIR UP TROUBLES BOTH IN KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA.

2. LAMB TOLD JABER AL-ALI THAT, BECAUSE KUWAIT WAS PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN REGIONAL AND EVEN WORLD AFFAIRS, IT WOULD HAVE TO EXPECT TO RECEIVE INCREASED ATTENTION IN THE WORLD PRESS. THIS ARTICLE HAD BEEN PUBLISHED BY A
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RESPONSIBLE NEWSPAPER. THE KUWAITI ACTION COULD STIMULATE ADDITIONAL ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT BY LESS RESPONSIBLE NEWSPAPERS.

3. ACCORDING TO BRITISH AMBASSADOR, JABER AL-ALI THEN ASKED HIM WHAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES. LAMB SUGGESTED THAT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

MIGHT HAVE DONE WELL TO CONTACT THE AUTHOR AND DISCUSS
SUBJECT WITH HIM, POSSIBLY EVEN INVITING HIM TO COME TO
KUWAIT TO LEARN TRUE STORY.

4. COMMENT: BRITISH AMBASSADOR CONSIDERS THAT KUWAITIS
HAD OVERREACTED IN THIS AFFAIR. HE DID NOT OBTAIN ANY
INDICATION FROM JABER AL-ALI AS TO A POSSIBLE TIME
LIMITATION OF THIS BAN, NOR DID HE APPARENTLY OBTAIN
ANY COMMITMENT FROM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO CONSIDER
LIFTING BAN OR TO PURSUE LAMB'S SUGGESTION ABOUT
CONTACT WITH MCDERMOTT.
MAESTRONE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, HEALTH, JOURNALISTS, THE PRESS, ALLEGATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE, PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUWAIT02501
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770162-0915
Format: TEL
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770579/aaaacqkt.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: da7c4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 KUWAIT 2427
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2598434
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOK \BAN\ ON \FINANCIAL TIMES\
TAGS: PFOR, KU, UK, (SABAH, SABAH AL-SALIM AL), (MCDERMOTT, ANTHONY), (AL-ALI, SHAIKH JABER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/da7c4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009